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# NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELIZABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL



DOSAGE OF ANTIDIPHThERIA SERUM.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association*, in an abstract of a paper in *Hygica*, Stockholm, says: “Suber tabulates statistics from various countries to sustain his assumption that antidiphtheritic serum should be given in large doses (5,000 to 15,000 units) in the severer cases of diphtheria, irrespective of age. The moderately severe cases can be treated with moderate doses (3,000 to 4,000 units). Intravenous injection in the extremely severe cases has a prompt and certain curative action, without serious by-effects, even when colossal doses are used. He claims that the published statistics show that insufficient doses have been given in many instances. Injection of large doses of the serum also proves effective even against diphtheritic paralysis. He rejoices that the price of the serum has recently been reduced in Sweden, and urges that all the local boards of health and hospitals should be provided with the serum for preventive injections at need, free of cost.”

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A NEW WOUND DRESSING.—The *Medical Record* says: “Dr. Aymerd, in an article in the *Lancet*, advocates the substitution of plain glass for gauze in dressing wounds. He describes an experiment with a piece of thick window glass, the edges of which were ground smooth. He smeared the glass with an antiseptic preparation and applied it to the wound, which healed quickly, without leaving a scar. The author claims for his method that it enables the wound to be examined without the removal of the dressing, that it relieves pain, promotes healing, and is economical.”

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A SURGICAL SUGGESTION.—The *Journal of Surgery* says: “The painfulness of withdrawing packings that have dried in a wound may be avoided by soaking them with peroxide of hydrogen.”

**LAVAGE FOR THE RELIEF OF VOMITING.**—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* says: "An old and valuable household remedy is the free ingestion of water as hot as can be taken—with a pinch of salt, for flavor, if desired. It is popularly said that the water will either correct the stomach or will make vomiting easy and less unpleasant if it must continue. Attention is again called to the value of this procedure by Sir William H. Bennett, who has adopted the suggestion made and put into practical effect by a patient, namely, the ingestion of ordinary cold or tepid water or other perfectly unirritating fluid in as large amounts as the patient desires. The vomiting may and is likely to persist, but the stomach is gradually washed out automatically and the patient is made more comfortable."

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**HOLDING BREATH IN CHILDREN.**—The *Inter-State Medical Journal*, quoting from a German contemporary says: "The condition is found most often in nervous children. As a result usually of nervous excitement, the child suffers a momentary spasm of the muscles of respiration, becomes markedly cyanotic, at times quite unconscious. During the attack the child usually falls backward, and the spasm ends with a loud cry and a forced expiration. The duration of the attack is usually measured by seconds. Spasm of the glottis is never associated with the condition. Examination also shows the absence in nearly all cases of the symptoms of tetany, with which the condition cannot be brought into relation. The spasm has nothing to do with epilepsy. Neumann holds that the condition may be regarded as a very early sign of neurasthenia. Inasmuch as the attacks rarely occur after the fifth year, and as they are never fatal, their importance is to be found merely in their suggestiveness as to a neuropathic temperament, or as manifesting a very early sign of a neurasthenia, to be later more fully developed. The treatment of the attack consists in irritation of the skin by throwing cold water in the face, and the general treatment is that of neurasthenia."

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**SPINAL ANESTHESIA.**—The *Zentralblatt für Gynäkologie*, quoted by the *Medical Record*, has the following: "Freund says that now its probationary period is over and the proper technique has been learned by experience, spinal anesthesia has been placed on a secure footing as one of the greatest advances in surgery. The author describes a number

of hysterectomies and other major abdominal operations performed to great advantage under this anesthesia, and he lays great stress on its superiority over inhalation anesthesia in marantic individuals."

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MINOR POINTS IN OBSTETRICS.—The *Journal of the American Medical Association* says: "A German confrère states that the degree of relaxation of the soft parts during a delivery may be estimated from the behavior of the lower eyelid. The floor of the pelvis yields parallel to the facility with which the lower lid can be everted. His communication was published in the *Med. Klinik*, No. 26. Winkler has also recently called attention to the necessity for warmth as a means of promoting delivery. It is a physical process, and as such is attended by expenditure of heat. If the organism is weak from anemia, fatigue or chilliness, the physical process proceeds with less energy, and it may prove necessary to resort to forceps. Before doing so, however, the patient should be thoroughly warmed, which may restore sufficient energy for delivery to terminate spontaneously. His experience has been that a warm tub bath or a sitz bath, with cloths wrung out of hot water applied to the thighs and a hot foot bath are liable to start vigorous contractions. Hot drinks are valuable adjuvants. The position in the sitz bath also favors expulsion, the weight of the child and the heat irritating the lower segment of the uterus."

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THE CRADLE.—In a paper in the *St. Louis Medical Review* J. Zahorsky protests vigorously against the fashion of using no cradle for pacifying children. He considers the cradle a hundred times less objectionable than the modern devices which have been forced in place of it, such as the rubber pacifier, soothing syrups, etc. He urges that the cradle be returned to the nursery, especially in those homes where no nurse or nursery maid attends the baby. He considers the cradle one of the best therapeutic agents for a nervous baby or a sick one. It is easier on the mother and it is far preferable to the pacifier or paregoric. The irritability and peevishness in infants vary to such an extent that ordinary rules in regard to hygiene and management must often be very much modified. Here is where the cradle can be used to advantage. Zahorsky says that the signs of the times are that the cradle will again come into fashion; meanwhile the physician will do well to remember this well tried soothing agent for peevish children when ordinary means fail.